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More arsenic-affected soil to be removed from Spring Valley properties

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, awarded a contract today to Severson Environmental Services to remove soil with elevated levels of arsenic from 24 properties in the Spring Valley neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The work is part of ongoing efforts to investigate and clean up the 661-acre Spring Valley formerly used defense site known during World War I as the American University Experiment Station and Camp Leach.

To date, the Corps has collected about 3,500 soil samples from 1,484 of the 1,602 properties and lots within the Spring Valley site. Sample grids above the cleanup level of 20 parts per million were identified on 139 residential properties. Soil removal and backfilling have been carried out on 26 of the 139 properties and lots in July 2002.

Work on the next 24 properties is expected to begin by the end of May and should take 12 to 18 months, according to Ed Hughes, Spring Valley project manager for hazardous and toxic waste cleanup.

"The remaining 89 properties have lower arsenic levels," Hughes said. "Our plan is that these properties will be addressed starting in July 2005. We target completion by September 2007."

Residents of the 113 properties awaiting soil removal were sent a letter outlining the progress of the project and the prioritization of their properties. The letter explained that the Corps, EPA and the D.C. Department of Health determined the order in which the work would be preformed.

"Properties with the highest remaining arsenic levels were given first priority, with consideration also given to our ongoing ordnance investigation and our desire to disturb a property only once, thereby minimizing impacts to the daily lives of members of the household," Hughes wrote.